

Wayne, PA — On Friday, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), participated in the Main Line Relay for Life at Valley Forge Military Academy to support those whose lives have been touched by cancer and to raise money for the American Cancer Society. During the survivor ceremony, where individuals spoke of their personal experiences with cancer, Congressman Sestak spoke of his own experience.

“As someone who has lived with a family member in the pediatric cancer ward, I know the importance of cancer research,” noted Joe. “I applaud the American Cancer Society and the volunteers and supporters today for raising awareness for this terrible disease and more importantly for raising money that can be used for essential research.”

Last year, 73,630 new cases of cancer were diagnosed in Pennsylvania alone. Nationwide, nearly 1.4 million individuals are diagnosed with cancer each year. In Congress, Congressman Sestak has been working to improve the quality and accessibility of our healthcare system. As a member of the Education and Labor Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, which has jurisdiction over employee health benefits, as well as the Small Business Subcommittee on Regulations, Healthcare and Trade, the Congressman has been working to make healthcare more affordable for small businesses. In addition, he helped expand funding for embryonic stem cell research by cosponsoring and voting for the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act (H.R. 3), and he introduced the Conquer Childhood Cancer Act (H.R. 1553), along with Congresswoman Deborah Pryce (R-OH), to encourage and expand support for biomedical research programs for childhood cancer and to establish a population-based childhood cancer database. Congressman Sestak also pushed for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate with drug manufacturers to obtain more affordable medication prices for Medicare beneficiaries by cosponsoring and voting for H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Direct Negotiation Act.

“We are making progress in the fight against cancer. There was a drop of 3,014 cancer deaths in the United States from 2003 to 2004, the most recent year for which mortality data are available from the National Center for Health Statistics. And this drop was significantly larger than the 369 fewer deaths reported for the previous time period (2002 to 2003), which itself marked the first decline in actual number of cancer deaths in the more than 70 years since nationwide data began to be compiled,” added Congressman Sestak. “However, there is more that we can do. We can increase funding for research, educate individuals about preventive measures, and improve access to health insurance. I am committed to pursuing all of these goals.”

Relay for Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. It is a unique event that offers communities an opportunity to participate in the fight against cancer. Relays are 12 to 24 hours in length and go overnight. Teams of 8 to 15 people camp out at and take turns walking, jogging or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because Relay for Life is a community gathering rather than an athletic event, anyone and everyone can participate. Relay for Life teams share a common purpose - supporting the American Cancer Society's mission. Relay for Life represents the hope

that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day, cancer will be eliminated.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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